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## THE MAKING OF A PLAN FOR THE CITY OF WASHINGTON.

BY CHARLES MOORE.

(Read before the Society January 6, 1902.)

Albert Gallatin, writing from Washington in 1801, expressed the optimistic opinion that the portion of the Federal City near the President's house might, in a short time, form a town equal in size and population to Lancaster or Annapolis, a prediction based mainly on the proximity of the locality in question to the well-established tobacco port of Georgetown. Mr. Thomas Twining, an English traveler who visited the site of the capital city in 1795, thought that Georgetown must share the advantages of Washington, but be independent of its failure. If Twining and Gallatin could revisit the national capital and stand on one of the antiquated bridges that span Rock Creek, they would look down into the deep ravine and see nearly the same conditions that met their gaze when first their eyes beheld that thread of water twisting between steep banks overgrown with trees. Officially the name of Georgetown is obsolete; but not until that portion of the Rock Creek Valley which lies between the ancient town and the modern city shall have been developed into a parkway will the line of demarcation be obliterated and Georgetown become in fact, as it is now in theory, a part of Washington.

Certain Georgetown families still keep alive traditions of the days before the seat of government was removed to the banks of the Potomac; and upon proper introduction one may be permitted to gaze on priceless miniatures

of the piquant Martha Custis, together with many of the household belongings of the Father of his Country, relics cherished by persons who have the right to refer to those illustrious personages by the titles of intimate relationship. These families have ever held aloof from transitory Washington society as quite beneath consideration on the part of those whose title-deeds run back in direct line to royal grants. On the other hand, in Washington itself, of late years, several social circles have developed quite independently of Presidents, cabinet ministers, and senators. With a few notable exceptions, the great houses of Washington are occupied by those who have no direct connection with the government; and high officials are welcome guests at these houses, not so much because of their position as because they also are in pursuit of social pleasures.

Then, too, Washington has a winter population numbering thousands of persons drawn thither from all parts of the country by the comparative mildness of the climate, and the fact that it is the only city in the country where a man may have an interest in what is going on without being himself actively engaged in any pursuit. The debates in Congress, questions of foreign and domestic policy and the like, furnish subjects for conversation at the round of official receptions which occupy the first four afternoons of each week, and which any respectable person is privileged to attend; so that the sojourner at the capital is sure to make acquaintances at the homes of the representatives of his State, and speedily one's social circle may be enlarged as inclination and length of purse may dictate. Also, there are the retired army and navy officers who regard Washington as the home of their declining years; and the scientific people, a greater body numerically than is to be found in any other city, at least in this country; and the

thousands whom public business or pleasure calls to the capital for a few days or weeks at a time. So that Washington has become the representative American city; and any improvements which Congress may undertake in the District of Columbia will be made not alone for the benefit of the comparatively few permanent residents, but for the much greater number of American citizens who have a just pride in seeing that the capital of the United States is made worthy of the advancing power and taste of the people.

Primarily, however, the District of Columbia was created for the seat of government of the United States. The city of Washington, its public buildings, its parks and driveways, its great library, even its municipal government, all are maintained to serve the purposes of the national legislature and of those portions of the executive and judicial branches of the government which must be located at the capital.

Of late a theory has been put forth that the federal government simply finds a local habitation in the city of Washington, District of Columbia, and that there is a reciprocal relation between the government on the one hand and the municipality on the other. This view has support neither in the Constitution nor in history. Indeed, the capital was removed from New York and Philadelphia for the very purpose of giving to Congress exclusive jurisdiction over any territory which might be selected as the seat of government; and neither Washington nor Jefferson, L'Enfant nor Ellicott, ever had even a suspicion that they were not planning a city which in all its features should be the expression of the stability, the dignity, the taste, and the wealth of the government of the people of the United States. So that while the District of Columbia may offer attractions to private citizens, or opportunities to business and pro-

fessional men, the District is, first of all, the abiding-place of the highest representatives of the people, and its development should be prosecuted in accordance with this fact.

The work of improvement is by no means a new enterprise. For years Congress has been laying the foundations. Those very necessary measures of civic house-keeping, a perfect sewer system and an adequate supply of pure water, are rapidly nearing completion; and lands have been either purchased or reclaimed for all the larger parks, so that what now remains to be done is to develop areas already possessed, and to make suitable connections among them. The city that L'Enfant planned has outgrown its boundaries, and now the task is to extend to the entire District of Columbia as comprehensive and as well-considered treatment as he gave to the forests and plains with which he was called to deal.

Leading from the Lincoln memorial site, at the western end of the Monument grounds, the improvement plans contemplate a roadway skirting the Potomac and carried on a higher level than the wharves, so that one may look down on the busy and interesting scene of commercial activity. On reaching Rock Creek, the driveway turns up the valley and skirts the stream, while the street-cars and the general traffic continue to be carried on bridges spanning the narrow ravine, and the great thoroughfares of Massachusetts and Connecticut avenues cross the valley on stone viaducts already in process of construction. Two miles of parkway bring one to the Zoölogical Park, a well-developed tract of one hundred and seventy acres, where the Smithsonian Institution aims to preserve specimens of those animals which advancing civilization threatens with destruction. Adjoining the Zoö-

logical Park is the Rock Creek Park, throughout the length of which a single road winds along one bank of the stream to the boundary of the District. Across the park run a few country roads; and on its wooded knolls stand a few ancient stone houses, among them the Klinge place, one of the owners of which, on his wedding-night, returned to town on an errand, and, within sight of the lights and hearing of the voices of the merry-makers, was drowned in the torrent into which a sudden storm had turned the creek. Tumbling over boulders, darting around corners, spreading itself over shallows, Rock Creek is a picturesque stream; and no matter how thickly populated the District may become, Congress has provided for isolation and quiet within the long, cool valley.

The region between Rock Creek and the northwestern line of the District has so many natural beauties that the Commission found difficulty in restraining their desires to acquire a very considerable portion of it for park purposes. Washington, following the rule with cities, is growing most rapidly toward the northwest; and already the pick and shovel of the real-estate speculator are at work tearing down wooded hills to fill picturesque valleys, after a fashion that called forth the vehement protest of Cicero against those who, in his day, were making monotonous the surroundings of Rome.

A permanent system of highways, approved by Congress, regulates the subdivision of lands in the District, and the engineers have paid more or less attention to topography in their plans for this section, but for the most part the only possible recourse is immediately to acquire those ravines and heights which will afford the most desirable park connections, and leave to government or other public institutions and to seekers for villa sites the preservation of a few from among the multitude of natural beauties.

Already the ample grounds of the long-established Georgetown University command the Potomac and the Virginia hills; and farther to the north gleam the white buildings of the Naval Observatory, standing in a circle encompassed by Massachusetts Avenue. The observatory, one of the most satisfactory of Richard M. Hunt's creations, can be seen for miles across the District, affording a fine example to be followed in future building. The newly established Bureau of Standards (by means of which the United States purposes to create a set of standards that will make the manufacturers of this country independent of Germany and England) has acquired a fine site in the northwest section, where are also located the Episcopal Cathedral Foundation, which includes the Phœbe A. Hearst School for girls; and the American University, for which the Methodists have already gathered several millions of dollars. Here, too, the District has placed a high-service reservoir on the beautiful and commanding site of Old Fort Reno, one of a chain of fortifications that protected Washington during the Civil War.

When the highway system was laid out all of these abandoned forts were connected by streets; and the Park Commission advise that the grass-grown earthworks be brought into the park system, because the same reasons that made them available for fortifications, now make them desirable for small parks. One of them, Fort Stevens, possesses a unique interest. On July 10, 1864, General Jubal Early, with Ewell's corps of Lee's army, suddenly appeared at Rockville, ten miles from the District of Columbia, and the next morning marched down the Seventh street pike to capture the capital. At Fort Stevens Early was met by the Sixth Corps, which had been detached from Grant's army and sent up the Potomac for the protection of Washington. Surprised and

baffled by finding a veteran body of men where he had reasonably hoped to encounter only department clerks and the remnants of regiments left in Washington, Early was himself attacked, and in the hot engagement that followed, one of the coolest and keenest observers who stood on the parapet of Fort Stevens, amid whistling bullets and screeching shells, was Abraham Lincoln. When a surgeon standing by the President's side was wounded by a Minié ball, General Wright ordered Lincoln down. The President reluctantly obeyed the order; but nevertheless he would persist in climbing up again and again to have a look at a real battle.

Along the eastern side of Rock Creek Park extends Sixteenth street, running in a mathematically straight line from the White House to the District boundary. Where the street surmounts the hill, a mile and a half from the President's house, is a superb site for a great memorial arch or column, whence the beholder may command the entire panorama of the city, dominated by the graceful dome of the Capitol and the serene shaft of the Monument, and having for a background the long silver band of the river and the purple hills of Virginia. The beauty of the scene is marred to a degree by the restless roof of the State, War, and Navy Building, and by the impertinent tower of the city post-office, as insistent as a spoiled child; both architectural warnings for future guidance.

Near the northern boundary of the Zoölogical Park, the Piney Branch falls into Rock Creek; and not only is the wild valley of the tiny tributary highly picturesque, but also in its westerly course it cuts across both the great thoroughfares of Sixteenth and Fourteenth streets, and thus it is fitted by nature to form in part the parkway to the Soldiers' Home. Where Piney



Branch Valley rises to the level of the plain is a tract of thirty acres recently purchased as the site for a group of municipal hospital buildings; and by a suitable arrangement these proposed structures may be brought into reciprocal relations with the new building to be erected at the Soldiers' Home, so that by widening the connecting avenue a fine parkway may be completed between the parks on the axis of the White House and those on the axis of the Capitol.

The grounds of the Soldiers' Home, now five hundred acres in extent, are highly developed in an informal manner, with borders of forest and great central meadows, through which flows a small stream that forms ponds and miniature cascades. The white stone buildings on higher land at the northern end of the grounds command an extensive view of the city. For years the Soldiers' Home was the only driving-park in the District, as it is now the only one of any considerable extent. The original purchase was made in 1853, with the proceeds of the indemnity that General Scott exacted from Mexico for the benefit of the soldiers of the United States army. During the Civil War Lincoln often used the quarters of one of the officers as a refuge from the cares and worries of the White House, and on hot summer evenings he found strength in the cool of the hills and serenity in the wide prospect. To-day the grounds are the favorite drive alike of Washingtonians and of visitors, while the blue-coated soldier inmates of the Home willingly share with the black-gowned students of the neighboring Catholic University of America the enjoyment of well-shaded walks and wide stretches of meadow.

From the Soldiers' Home westward the parkway extends to the high wooded hill adjoining the extensive grounds of the Columbia Institution, a national college

for the higher education of the deaf and dumb; thence it continues until it strikes the Anacostia or Eastern Branch of the Potomac, including in its course one or two tree-topped elevations that should be acquired for breathing-spaces, in anticipation of the not distant day when the growth of population will lead to the occupation of the entire District.

There was a time when the town of Bladensburg, at the head of navigation on the Anacostia, disputed with Georgetown and Baltimore for preëminence as a shipping-port of tobacco. In 1755 a portion of Braddock's army was quartered on its people, and thence marched to death on the banks of the Monongahela. There, too, was the famous dueling-ground which claimed Commodore Decatur among its victims. And in Bladensburg streets was fought a disastrous battle of the War of 1812, after which the British marched unopposed to burn the Capitol and the President's house. For General Ross, who committed the vandalism of destroying the public buildings of a nation, a place in Westminster Abbey was prepared, and his family were permitted to add to their titles that of Ross of Bladensburg.

It is many decades since the meanest wood-scow went up with the tide to the wharves of Bladensburg; and of late years the sewage-polluted flats of the Anacostia have been a menace to the health of the people of Washington, seriously retarding the growth of a large portion of the District. Subjected to the miasmal emanations from these vast stretches of tide-washed mud are more than two thousand insane persons confined at St. Elizabeth's, besides the prisoners in the jail and the workhouse, the poor in the almshouse, the sick in the city hospital, hundreds of workers in the great gun-shops at the navy-yard, and the marines in

barracks—a striking example of the cruelty of governmental neglect.

The new plans contemplate dredging these flats to create within the area a water park with encircling driveways and wooded islands. Some six hundred acres will thus be changed into a place for boating and swimming in summer and skating in winter; and, as a result, sports now indulged in but sparingly for lack of opportunity will be encouraged. In recent years the object seems to have been to push the river away from the city, and to deny to the people most enjoyable forms of recreation. A change in this particular cannot come too soon; and those who are familiar with the large use that Londoners make of the narrow Thames will appreciate how welcome to the people of Washington must be any line of improvement that shall utilize the lavish pleasure resources of the Potomac.

Where the Anacostia unites with the Potomac are the old arsenal-grounds, long occupied as an artillery post, but recently set apart by the Secretary of War for the higher instruction of the officers of the corps of engineers. Within the next few years it is proposed to rebuild the post and to add a war college, where the officers of the United States army shall receive the highest possible training in all subjects pertaining to their profession. When this work is completed the place will become a great military park, with ample parade-grounds flanked by tasteful quarters for the officers, barracks for the enlisted men of the engineer corps, and halls of instruction, the whole surrounded by a riverside drive connected with the boulevard coming from Anacostia Park.

Directly opposite the arsenal-grounds a long, low island separates the Washington channel of the Potomac from the main or Georgetown channel. The en-

gineers have created this island out of the shoals and bars on the river-bottom, and have planted willows along the water's edge. Although the work of sucking up river-sand to enlarge the reclaimed area is still in progress, all that is necessary to turn the island into a most attractive park is a dike to keep back possible floods, a roadway on the raised land, and informal planting of the rich alluvial lands of the central space. The almost immediate effect of such treatment will be a pleasure-ground that will rival in beauty and availability the famous Margarethen Island at Budapest.

By a recent decision of the Supreme Court the title to the wharf property of Washington has been decided to be in the United States as the riparian owner; and when the courts shall have determined the value of the improvements thereon, the District will enter into possession of the property. This will afford an opportunity to rebuild the wharves as permanent structures of stone, with a terraced roadway carried on masonry arches to form the connecting parkway between the proposed war college and the Monument grounds, thus completing the inner circle of park connections, and forming a continuous drive around the city.

No park system for the District of Columbia would be complete that did not include ample driveways up the Potomac, not only to the District boundary, but even to the Great Falls, sixteen miles above the city, whence comes the water-supply. A well-constructed roadway covers the conduit through which the water for the city flows; and in one place, where a deep ravine is crossed, a stone arch with a span equal to the height of Bunker Hill Monument has been constructed—the longest single span as yet built of masonry. The river for miles is narrowed between high wooded banks, whose sky-lines are as wild as they were when Captain

John Smith gazed upon them. To add to the picturesqueness, a half-used canal creeps along the river's edge, its frequent locks, with the whitewashed buildings for the keepers, giving a quaint flavor to the prospect. Down the Potomac, on the Virginia side, it has been proposed to build a roadway to Mount Vernon, and in time, doubtless, this project also will be carried out. The plans already laid out, however, will provide work enough to employ the attention of Congress for many years to come.

The expense of almost all the improvements mentioned in this paper will be borne by the District of Columbia, and the money will be appropriated according to the Organic Act of 1878 providing a permanent form of government for the District. That is to say, one half of the amounts appropriated by Congress will be paid from the revenues of the District, which are raised by the taxation of the real and personal property (including franchises) within the District, and the other half will be paid from the Treasury of the United States, such division having been found to be the most equitable method of providing for the expenses of the seat of government. Moreover, the projects are so arranged that the appropriations for them can be made from year to year, as the District finances may warrant and as population increases; and the increase in land valuations consequent on the improvements should provide for the additional expense by larger revenues from taxation.

There is no question that the moneys appropriated will be expended honestly and efficiently, because it is beyond question that the government of the District of Columbia is conducted with entire honesty, with a very high degree of intelligence, and without political partisanship. This result is not reached, as most writers on the subject have assumed, because of the denial of

suffrage to the citizens of the District, thus making a paradox in a republican government. The true explanation is to be found in the fact that under the express provisions of the Constitution the nation's capital is governed by the citizens of the United States, who choose its aldermen and the members of its legislature when they elect senators and representatives; and that Congress deals with the District of Columbia in an enlightened spirit, and with an understanding that comes of familiarity with large affairs.